

What is claimed is:

1. A running board assembly for accommodating access to a motor vehicle, said running board assembly comprising:
  - 5 a plurality of mounting brackets fixedly securable to a motor vehicle; and a step movably secured to said plurality of mounting brackets, said step defining a stepping surface, a peripheral edge extending around said step and a contoured surface opposite said stepping surface, said step movable between a deployed position providing access to said stepping surface and a stowed position wherein a portion of
  - 10 said peripheral edge abuts the motor vehicle and said contoured surface merges with adjacent vehicle panels.
2. The running board assembly as set forth in claim 1 wherein said contoured surface is shaped to provide a rocker panel appearance.
- 15 3. The running board assembly as set forth in claim 2 including a linkage secured to said step for defining a path of travel for said step between said deployed and stowed positions.
- 20 4. A running board assembly as set forth in claim 3 including a motor operatively connected to said linkage for moving said linkage and said step.
5. A running board assembly as set forth in claim 4 wherein said step includes a cantilever arm extending out from said step.
- 25 6. A running board assembly as set forth in claim 5 wherein said operative connection includes a transmission having a sector gear operatively engaging said motor.
- 30 7. A running board assembly as set forth in claim 5 including a sector gear secured to said step, said sector gear having an arcuate, toothed portion and defining a slot having upper and lower slot ends.

8. A running board assembly as set forth in claim 7 including a circle gear operatively connected to said motor, said circle gear defining a toothed portion engaging said arcuate, toothed portion of said sector gear such that upon activation of said motor said sector gear travels between said upper and lower slot ends to move said 5 step between its stowed and deployed positions.